

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 PC-10 OMB-01 NIC-01 EB-11 DRC-01 /139 W

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P R 212225Z JUN 74

FM AVEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5778

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E P N T I A L SAN SALVADMR 2505

E.O. 11652 - GDS

TAGS: PINT, ES

SUBJ: PUBLIC DEBATE CONTINUES ON DUARTE ISSUE

REF: SAN SALVADOR 2431

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

1. COMMUNIST DOMINATED UDN ADDED ITS VOICE TO PROTEST AGAINST GOES DECISION TO BLOCK RETURN FROM CARACAS OF FORMER PDC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE DUARTE (REFTEL). IN JUNE 20 NEWSPAPER AD, IT BRANDED THE ACTION AS "ONE MORE VIOLATION OF THE CONSTITUTION" AND AS AN AFFRONT TO THE "DIGNITY AND HOPE" OF THE PEOPLE. UDN URGED SUPPORTERS TO ATTEND PDC-LAUJDMRED RALLY ON EVENING JUNE 20.

2. MORE THAN 1000 PERSONS ATTENDED THE JUNE 20 MEETING DESPITE HEAVY RAINS THROUGHOUT THE DEAY AND POLICE HARASSMENT PF PDC SOUND TRUCKS. IN WHAT MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE TO BE A VAIN GESTURE, PDC LEGAL ADVISER (AND SAN SALVADOR MAYOR) DR JOSE
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ANTONIO MORALES EHRLICH PETITIONED THE SUPREME COURT TO

GUARANTEE DUARTE'S CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO RETURN TO EL SALVADOR.
(MOD VOMERO TOLD DATT COURT MAY SIT ON PETITION FOREVER.)

3. IN THE GOVERNMENT'S FIRST COMMENT ON THE DUARTE AFFAIR, PCN REBUTTED OPPOSITION CHARGES IN NEWSPAPER ADS JUNE 20 AND JUNE 21. IN A SOMEWHAT HYSTERICAL FASHION, THE OFFICIAL PARTY CONTRASTED THE CONSTRUCTIVE, NATIONALISTIC MOLINA GOVERNMENT GRAPPLING WITH DIFFICULT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, TO THE IRRESPONSIBLE, INTERNATIONALLY-CONTROLLED OPPOSITION TRYING TO EXPLOIT THESE CONDITIONS TO GAIN POLITICAL ADVANTAGE. THE PCN PICTURED DUARTE NOT AS LEADER OF UNO BUT AS DUPE OF UDN. IT CHARGED, MOREOVER, THE UDN DID NOT REALLY WANT DUARTE TO RETURN BUT SOUGHT ONLY TO CREATE "CONFUSION AND ANARCHY." ON THE ISSUE OF DUARTE'S CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO RETURN, THE PCN IMPLIED THAT THESE DO NOT EXTEND TO THOSE WHO PROMOTE SOCIAL DISORDDER AND THREATEN POLITICAL STABILITY.

4. IN PRIVATE, PCN LEGISLATIVE DEPUTIES AND CABINET OFFICIALS ARE PUSHING THE LINE THAT THE GOVERNMENT FEARED THAT THE RADICAL LEFT WOULD ASSASSINATE DUARTE ON HIS RETURN AND PLACE THE BLAME ON THE GOVERNMENT.

5. COMMENT: VERSIONS OF A LEFTIST PLOT TO ASSASSINATE DUARTE SEEM FAR FETCHED AND PROBABLY REPRESENT GOVERNMENT RATIONALIZATION OF ITS CLEAR VIOLATION OF THE CONSTITUTION. SECURITY FORCES ARE REPORTEDLY KNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO KEEP TIGHTER REIN ON PROTESTERS. PDC LEADERS APPEAR QUITE CONTENT WITH THE WHOLE SITUATION AND FEEL THEY HAVE THE GOVERNMENT DEFINITELY ON THE DEFENSIVE.
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